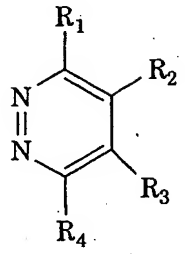
ABSTRACT

Disclosed are compounds of the formula (I) and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof:



(I)

wherein

R_1 is a halogen, or an oxygen linked leaving group including an aromatic ether, an alkyl sulfonate, an aryl sulfonate, an alkyl phosphonate, an aryl phosphonate, an alkyl phosphate or aryl phosphate;

R_2 is $COOR_5$, $C(=O)NH(CHR_5)_m\text{-}COOR_5$, $NH(CHR_5)_mCON(R_5)R_6$, $C(=O)N(R_5)R_6$ or $NH(CHR_5)_mOH$;

R_3 is H or alkyl;

R_4 is H, sybstituted or unsubstituted aryl, heteroaryl or alkyl;

R_5 and R_6 are independently H, lower alkyl, aryl, hydroxy alkyl, amino alkyl, heteroaryl, lower alkylene-aryl, lower alkylene-heteroaryl or lower cycloalkyl; and m = 0-6; pharmaceutical compositions containing the compounds; and a method for inhibiting interleukin-1β protease activity in a mammal utilizing the compounds and compositions.